KNIGHTQUEST™ THE SEARCH

JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE™

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JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE
6 NOV 93
US$1.25
CAN$1.60
UK 70p

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Velluto
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KNIGHTQUEST:

THE SEARCH

EVERYONE ON THE ISLAND WAS AWAKENED BY THE EXPLOSIONS THAT REDUCED THE HOTEL TO A PILE OF SMOLDERING RUBBLE.

ONLY SECONDS AGO, PANTING AND SOAKED, THESE TWO RAN INTO THE SQUARE AND STOPPED AS THOUGH THEY HAD HIT A WALL. NOW--

--THEY STARE THROUGH THE RAIN, EYES STINGING FROM THE SMOKE, UNTIL, FINALLY, THE BRONZE TIGER WHISPERS--

THEY'RE IN THERE... WAYNE AND THE ENGLISH GUY, ALFRED. BURIED UNDER ALL...*THAT!*

WE GOTTA HELP 'EM!

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YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW IT'S HOPELESS. THERE AIN'T A PRAYER THEY'RE ALIVE.

BUT I GOTTA DO SOMETHING!

SEÑOR AND SEÑORITA--

--DO NOT MOVE--

--OR WE WILL SHOOT!

BLASTED SMOKE!

EH--? WHERE IS THE GIRL?

WHERE IS SHE--THE SEÑORITA? TALK OR--

YOU'LL DO WHAT? SKIN MY KNEE?

WE SHOOT THIS ONE AND THEN LOOK FOR THE FEMALE!

KONK

OWWW!

SPLAT

I'M GETTING OLD. THAT TOOK AT LEAST *THREE* SECONDS.

SHOULD'VE ONLY TAKEN *TWO*.

GYPSY-- YOU HERE?

YEAH, IT HAD TO BE YOU WHO TOSSED THAT ROCK.

THANKS.

SOME DAY YOU GOTTA TEACH ME THAT *VANISHING* TRICK!

THEN I'LL SELL IT TO DAVID COPPERFIELD AND RETIRE.

COME ON. LET'S FIND SOME PLACE OUT OF THE WIND.

EXCELLENT SHELTER, MASTER BRUCE.

JUST ANOTHER OF THE GOODIES--

--HAROLD PACKED INTO THE CHAIR, ALFRED.

THE EXPLOSIONS HAVE CEASED. I SUPPOSE THE FIREWORKS ARE OVER. YOU WERE WISE TO ANTICIPATE THEM.

THEY TRIED TO KILL US ONCE AND THEY KNEW WHERE WE WERE. GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE WAS NO MORE THAN COMMON SENSE.

AND COMING HERE BEFORE THE ATTACK WAS--

THE TIMING THAT COMES FROM YEARS OF EXPERI-ENCE.

--YOU ARE BOTHERING TO CONTINUE DISGUISING YOURSELF AS... YOURSELF? YOU ALREADY LOOK LIKE BRUCE WAYNE.

IN FACT, YOU HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE BRUCE WAYNE.

GYPSY AND THE TIGER ARE SMART. THEY'LL FIGURE THAT GOTHAM'S KLUTZIEST PLAYBOY COULDN'T MOUNT THIS RESCUE.

MAY I ASK WHY--

THEY'RE ALSO OBSERVANT. THEY'VE PROBABLY ALREADY SPOTTED THE DISGUISE AND ARE ASSUMING I'M SOMEONE ELSE.

THEY MIGHT EVEN THINK I'M BATMAN.

POOR, DELUDED YOUTHS.

--THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR BRUCE WAYNE AND ALFRED.

AND WE DON'T WANT TO MEET ANOTHER BOY SCOUT TROOP. THE *NEXT* BUNCH MIGHT KNOW WHICH END OF THEIR GUNS THE BULLETS COME OUT OF.

WHAT I'M THINKING WE CAN DO FOR WAYNE IS COMPLETE THE MISSION HE GAVE US.

'COURSE, YOU GOT A VOTE IN THIS, TOO. BUT IF YOU AGREE, WE OUGHTTA--

"-- GET INSIDE THAT HACIENDA AND--

"--RESCUE JACK DRAKE AND DOCTOR KINSOLVING..."

CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S DYING?

UNTIE ME FOR FIVE MINUTES. LET ME SEE IF I CAN DO SOMETHING--

WHY ARE YOU SO WORRIED ABOUT THIS MAN? WHAT IS HE TO YOU? A-- WHAT IS THE ENGLISH WORD-- *BOYFRIEND...?*

NO. HE'S A HUMAN BEING. HE'S SUFFERING. AND I'M A DOCTOR.

AH, A SISTER OF *MERCY*. HOW QUAINT.

IF I LET THIS LITTLE DICKENS LOOSE, YOU WILL *BOTH* SUFFER. YOU WILL SCREAM FOR HOURS.

SO, MY MERCIFUL LADY, YOU WOULD DO WELL TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH *SHUT!*

SOON, SEÑOR ASP WILL BE HERE. PERHAPS HE WILL LET YOU SPONGE SEÑOR DRAKE'S FEVERED BROW.

WHO'S THIS *ASP* YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT?

THE FINE GENTLE-MAN WHO HIRED US TO ACQUIRE YOU AND SEÑOR DRAKE.

SOBRINO-- ***NO!***

I SWEAR! YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP YOUR EYES ON THIS RASCAL EVERY SECOND.

SEÑOR TIO--

...THE DOGS HAVE COME BACK FROM THE VETERINARIAN!

I SEE THEY ARE AS CHARMING AS EVER.

TEND TO THEIR NEEDS AND THEN TURN THEM LOOSE. AND WARN THE OTHERS TO STAY CLEAR OF THEM. THEY ARE NOT PARTICULAR--

--THEY WILL RIP OUT THE THROAT OF ANYONE!

AARRRR

ARRRHH

WHAT A PITY WE MUST RESORT TO SUCH ANIMALS. BUT THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY WERE WHEN SANTA PRISCA WAS A PARADISE-- WHEN WE TERRORISTS AND DRUG DEALERS COULD CALL THIS OUR PEACEFUL HAVEN.

SOBRINO-- NO!

NOW THERE IS *DISSENSION*. THERE HAVE BEEN OUTSIDERS ATTEMPTING TO MEDDLE IN OUR AFFAIRS.

THE DOGS ARE EXCELLENT GUARDS. THEIR SENSES ARE KEEN, THEY ARE NEVER FOOLED AND THEIR APPETITES MAKE THEM *RELENTLESS*!

"THEY WILL DEAL QUICKLY AND FINALLY WITH ANYONE WHO TRIES TO ENTER OUR HOME."

LOOKS LIKE A PIECE OF CAKE.

HERE'S THE DRILL--

--YOU DO YOUR VANISHING TRICK, GET INSIDE AND CREATE A DISTRACTION. SET A FIRE, MAYBE.

THEN MEET ME AT THE FRONT DOOR, LEAD ME TO WHERE THE CAPTIVES ARE. WE'LL GO IN, GRAB 'EM, TAKE A FEW NAMES AND BOOK.

OKAY, OKAY, IT'S NOT THE BEST PLAN YOU EVER HEARD. I'M *MUSCLE*, NOT BRAIN. IT'S THE BEST I CAN DO AND--

--BE CAREFUL, KID.

FUNNY... THE GUARDS ARE ALL GOING INSIDE.

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF--

SORRY, POOCH...

I GUESS THAT'S THAT!

...BUT YOU WOULDN'T'VE LIKED TIGER MEAT ANYWAY.

UNGHF!

AROOOOO

I GOT A GOOD TRADE IN ON MY HARP.

NAME'S GREEN ARROW BY THE WAY.

YOU THE ONE WHO SKEWERED THE GUY WITH THE MACHINE GUN BACK AT THE HOTEL?

THE SAME.

I'M PART OF YOUR TEAM. I KNOW SANTA PRISCA--HAD AN UNPLEASANT TIME HERE WITH A FACELESS GUY A WHILE BACK--

--SO WAYNE FIGURED I SHOULD SCOUT THE AREA AND STAY HIDDEN UNTIL NEEDED.

IF THAT IS WAYNE WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW.

YOU NOTICED THE MAKEUP TOO?

WHO DOES HE THINK HE'S FOOLING? HE MUST THINK WE ARE SOME KIND OF DIM!

WHAT... HAPPENED...

I DID.

I NEVER FIGURED MY GUARDIAN ANGEL WOULD CARRY A BOW AND ARROW!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE OBVIOUSLY BORROWED WAYNE'S IDENTITY FOR A FEW DAYS.

I SAW YOUR GIRL FRIEND GO INTO THE HACIENDA. SHE COMING OUT ANYTIME SOON?

SHE'S SUPPOSED TO SET UP--

"--A LITTLE MARSHMALLOW ROAST IN THERE--"

--SAY TO THE GIRL, YOU REMIND ME OF MY SISTER.

YOU GO SWIMMING WITH YOUR SISTER AT MIDNIGHT?

NO, BUT IT IS A GOOD IDEA. MY SISTER IS SO UGLY, SHE WOULD SCARE AWAY THE SHARKS--

--EH--? MY LIGHTER! I WAS HOLDING IT A SECOND AGO...

FLIC

WE HAVE JUST HEARD FROM SEÑOR ASP. HIS HELICOPTER WILL BE HERE WITHIN *FIVE* MINUTES.

HE WILL PAY US FOR SECURING THE DOCTOR AND DRAKE AND WE WILL CELEBRATE.

MR. DRAKE--JACK--IF YOU CAN HEAR ME... HOLD ON. SOON I'LL BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU.

DO NOT BE CERTAIN, DOCTOR KINSOLV--

--WHAT IS THAT I SMELL?

SMOKE!

LOOKS LIKE GYPSY GOT HER FIRE GOING.

THEN LET'S GO HELP HER FAN THE FLAMES.

MR. ASP--

--IF THAT BIG PLACE DOWN THERE IS WHERE WE'RE HEADED, WE MAYBE GOT PROBLEMS. LOOKS LIKE IT'S ON FIRE.

DESCEND, GERARD, AND LET US SEE WHAT EXACTLY IS WHAT.

TIO, THE HELICOPTER--

I CAN HEAR IT.

GET THE PRISONERS OUT TO MEET IT.

THE REST OF US WILL FIGHT THE FIRE.

YOU TOO, SOBRINO.

GYPSY...GOOD TO SEE YOU, KID. THIS IS GREEN--

LET'S HOLD THE INTRODUCTIONS TILL LATER.

OKAY, LET'S MOVE!

WHERE ARE KINSOLVING AND DRAKE?

SKRASHH

UH-OH.

I MAKE YOU SCREECH LIKE A MONKEY!

GYPSY...YOU KEEP TO THE SIDELINES. THIS AIN'T YOUR KIND OF SCENE.

YOU HANDLE THE KID WITH THE BLADE?

NO PROBLEM.

THEN I'LL DEAL WITH HIS BUDS.

SLOCK

I MAKE YOU SCREECH LIKE...

SHUDDUP!

SLAC

CLOSE QUARTERS LIKE THIS-- NO BIG DEAL.

PRETTY FANCY SHOOTING.

WHAT IS IT, KID?

THERE-- COMING OUT THE DOOR.

ARROW--LOOK! THAT'S GOTTA BE *DRAKE* ON THE STRETCHER. BUT WHERE'S THE WOMAN-- *KINSOLVING?*

INTRUDERS!

KILL THEM!

BRT-TAT

TAT

YOU DEAL WITH THE SHOOTERS. I'LL GET DRAKE AND KINSOLVING.

BETTER SCRAMBLE. DRAKE'S--

--ALREADY BEING LOADED INTO THE CHOPPER.

UNGHF!

DOCTOR KINSOLVING?

YES. WHO ARE--?

LATER. RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT TO GET DRAKE--

EEEEEEE!

RUN FOR THE GATE! WE'LL MEET YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE.

JACK--MY PATIENT...HE NEEDS ME!

SHONDRA--COME BACK!

--HAD THIS YACHT WAITING OFF THE COAST OF SANTA PRISCA, WAYNE?

YES, AND THREE OTHER POSSIBLE WAYS TO GET AWAY FROM THAT--

--CURSED ISLAND.

LOOK, THERE IS A BRIGHT SIDE. WE PUT A GANG OF PROFESSIONAL TERRORISTS OUT OF BUSINESS.

YEAH, BUT WE BLEW THE JOB WE SET OUT TO DO.

WE FAILED.

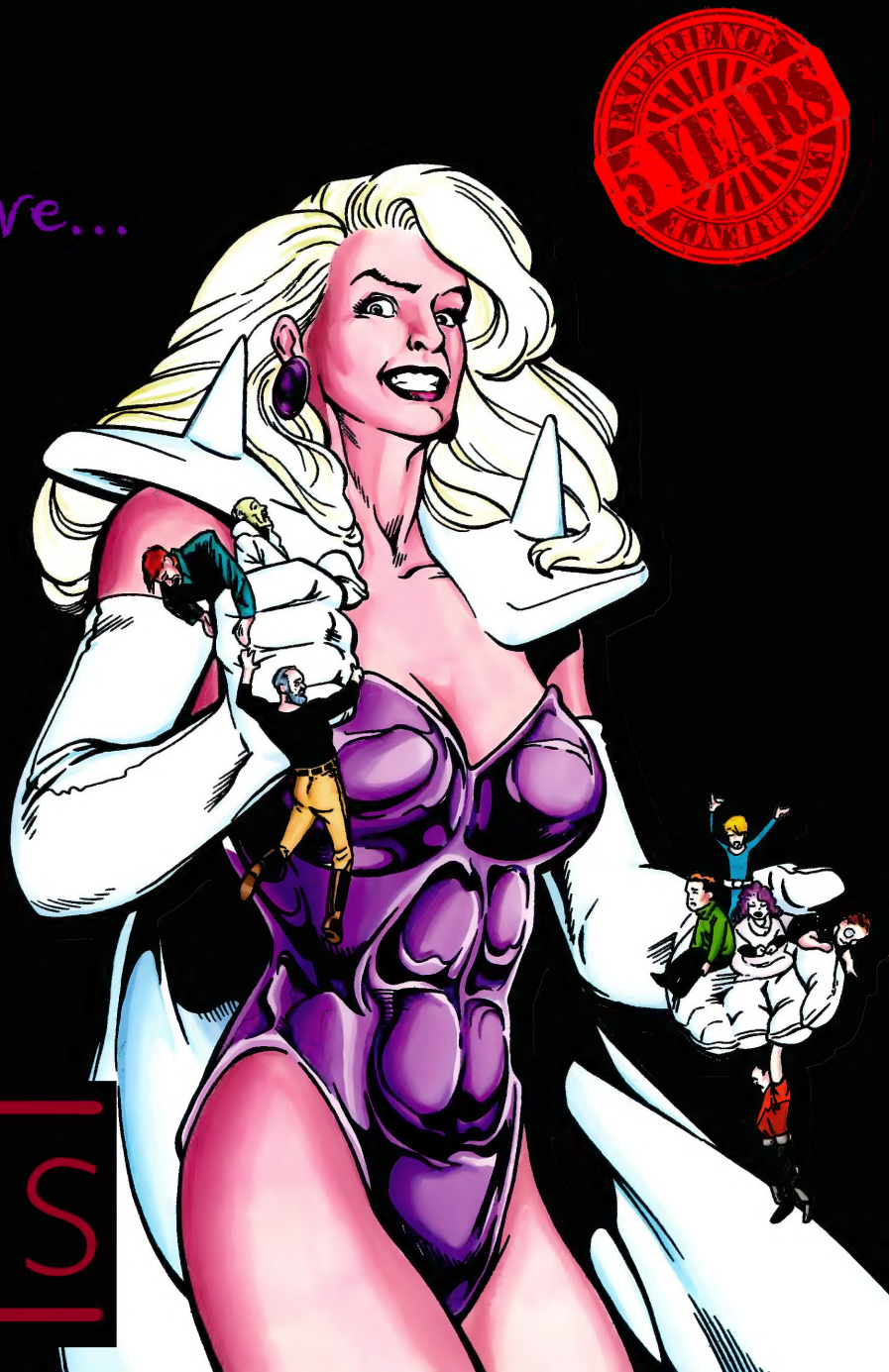
FAILED? NO. WE LOST A BATTLE. BUT NOT THE WAR.

WE WILL FIND THEM. AND WE'LL SAVE THEM. WE'LL BRING THEM HOME.

BELIEVE IT!

CONTINUED IN *SHADOW OF THE BAT* #21

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus